

President Bush. Igor. In *Ingles?* [Laughter]

Foreign Minister Ivanov. Thank you for receiving us, first thing.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

Foreign Minister Ivanov. The second thing, before we had a lot of interest, good documents, but we couldn't implement. Now we have good document, and the most important thing is to implement. This is our main objective now. Thank you.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. Very good.

Sandra [Sandra Sobieraj, Associated Press], quick question.

Iraq

Q. Mr. President, your administration concluded yesterday that Saddam Hussein pretty much blew his last chance to come clean on his weapons of mass destruction. Are we now on a path to war?

President Bush. One thing is for certain. We will fulfill the terms and conditions of 1441.

The world spoke clearly that we expect Mr. Saddam Hussein to disarm. Yesterday's document was not encouraging. We expected him to show that he would disarm. And as the Secretary of State said, it's—it's a long way from there. And we're serious about keeping the peace. We're serious about working with our friends in the United Nations so that this body, ably led by Kofi Annan, has got relevance as we go into the 21st century. And yesterday was a disappointing day for those who have longed for peace.

Listen, I want to thank you all for coming.

Q. Trent Lott question?

President Bush. I would have, but we ran out of time. [Laughter] We ran out of time. They eat up your time. We had only so much time available. They ate up your time. I'm sorry. [Laughter]

Q. You can drop by later.

President Bush. We could do that; you're right. But we're due at Christmas parties.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:31 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Participating in the meeting were Secretary-General Kofi Annan of the United Nations, Minister for Foreign Affairs Per Stig Moller of Denmark, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Igor Sergeyevich Ivanov of Russia.

In his remarks, the President referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Statement on Senator Trent Lott's Decision Not To Seek the Senate Majority Leader's Position

December 20, 2002

I respect the very difficult decision Trent made on behalf of the American people. As Majority and Minority Leader of the Senate, Trent Lott improved education for the American people; he led the way in securing tax relief; he strengthened our national security; and he stood for a bold and effective foreign policy. Trent is a valued friend, and a man I respect. I am pleased he will continue to serve our Nation in the Senate, and I look forward to working with him on our agenda to make America safer, stronger, and better.

Message on the Observance of Christmas 2002

December 20, 2002

I send greetings to those celebrating Christmas.

During Christmas, we gather with family and friends to celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. As God's only Son, Jesus came to Earth and gave His life so that we may live. His actions and His words remind us that service to others is central to our lives and that sacrifice and unconditional love must guide us and inspire us to lead lives of compassion, mercy, and justice.

The true spirit of Christmas reflects a dedication to helping those in need, to giving hope to those in despair, and to spreading peace and understanding throughout the Earth. As we share love and enjoy the traditions of this holiday, we are also grateful for the men and women of our Armed Forces who are working to defend freedom, secure our homeland, and advance peace and safety around the world.

This Christmas, may we give thanks for the blessings God has granted to our Nation and